



July 27, 2009

Andrew Crabtree
Principal Planner
Department of Planning, Building, & Code Enforcement
City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113



Re: Promoting Parks and Open Spaces in the City of San Jose to Improve the Health of Diverse Communities

Dear Mr. Crabtree and Members of the General Plan Task Force:

On behalf of The Health Trust, a Silicon Valley nonprofit foundation committed to advancing wellness, I am writing to urge you to prioritize the needs of San Jose's more diverse, lower income communities in your efforts to implement the Greenprint and align it with the city's general plan. The Health Trust believes this is a highly effective way to dramatically improve the overall health of our community.

Data shows improving access to parks and open spaces, including community gardens improves health. Data also shows low income and minority populations suffer a disproportionate share of health problems, and have less access to parks and open spaces. Consider these statistics:

In Santa Clara County, low income and minority populations suffer disproportionate rates of chronic illness such as diabetes, which can be largely prevented through physical activity and good nutrition.

Low-Income and Ethnic Groups are Disproportionally Impacted by a Lack of Park Space
According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Approximately 30% of teens from lower-income families, as well as 29% of Latino and 30% of African American teens reported no access to a safe park, playground, or open space, compared with less than 20% of teens from affluent families and 22% of white teens.

Local Access to Parks and Open Spaces Increases Physical Activity Levels
A 2006 Rand Corporation study of public park use and physical activity found that people who live within 1 mile of a park are four times more likely to visit the park once or more per week and have an average of 38% more exercise sessions per week than those living farther away.

The Health Trust congratulates the City of San Jose on the work they have done thus far on the Greenprint, and their commitment to parks and open space. We believe by prioritizing the needs of the city's lowest income, most diverse neighborhoods, the city can best improve the health of its residents

Yours in health,


Frederick J. Ferrer
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: General Plan Task Force Members

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